



## Planning for Civil Defense

Russell J. Hopley

To cite this article: Russell J. Hopley (1949) Planning for Civil Defense, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, 5:4, 111-126, DOI: [10.1080/00963402.1949.11457057](https://doi.org/10.1080/00963402.1949.11457057)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00963402.1949.11457057>



Published online: 15 Sep 2015.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 1



View related articles [↗](#)



Citing articles: 1 View citing articles [↗](#)

# PLANNING FOR CIVIL DEFENSE

Russell J. Hopley

On November 13, 1948, the Office of Civil Defense Planning, directed by Russell J. Hopley, issued a 300-page report on **Civil Defense for National Security**. The following brief outline of the plan has been condensed from a speech made by Mr. Hopley in Omaha on December 10. President Truman has recently rejected proposals of the Office of Civil Defense Planning for the establishment of a permanent civil defense office, as recommended in the Report, and has placed responsibility in this field on the National Security Resources Board.

ON FEBRUARY 15, 1948, the report of the then War Department Civil Defense Board was released for public information. One of the principal recommendations of this board was that a general civil defense plan should be formulated for the United States and its Territories and possessions.

On February 22, 1948, I was asked by Secretary of Defense Forrester to organize and direct the fundamental plans and organizational structure for the civil defense of the country.

We had available to us the experience, recommendations, and findings of the United States Strategic Bombing Survey in Europe and Japan, and the World War II experience of the civil defense organizations in Europe, Japan, England, and our own country.

It may surprise some to learn that Japan had the oldest civil defense system, first organized in 1923. Their system was not very effective because the military kept telling the people that an enemy attack could never come to Japan, with the result that the people did not work at it.

Germany had what could have been a strong system, except for the fact that there were too many people reaching out for power and constantly attempting to exert political control over the various segments of the organization. In addition, it was hampered by administrative muddles. The result was constant conflict and a poorly working system.

England had the strongest and most effective civil defense program, organized four years prior to World War II. The people worked at it, and the result was an effective system which contributed greatly to the survival of England and the actual winning of the war.

In our current planning activity, we attempted to escape the pitfalls and errors in all of the previous experiences.

Briefly, our final program, entitled *Civil Defense for National Security*, proposes:

1. The establishment of a permanent Federal Office of Civil Defense within the executive branch of the Government, headed by a strong and able civilian director.

2. Within this office, a technical staff, headed by a deputy director, with divisions comprising: communications, engineering, fire services, police services, warden services, and emergency transportation.

3. A plans and operations staff, headed by a deputy director, with divisions comprising: organization and methods, mobile reserves and mutual aid, evacuation, aircraft observers and air raid warning, manpower and materiel, plant protection, and civilian war aid.

4. A training staff, headed by a deputy director, including: field services, methods and training materials, public education, schools and colleges, and leadership training.

5. A medical and health services and other special weapons defense staff, headed by a deputy director, to include medical and health services, radiological defense, chemical defense, and other special weapons defense.

6. We also propose the establishment of regional coordinators to assist in coordinating the activities of state and federal organizations and these with the military and other agencies, when involved.

7. Our plan contemplates the establishment of a civil defense agency within each state, with the governor as the responsible head, the appointment of an advisory council, composed of representative citizens of the state, to advise on civil defense matters—the state activity to be headed by a director. The various operating divisions in the state

organization would be similar to those in the federal organization.

8. Similarly, the establishment of a civil defense agency in each community, with the mayor as the responsible municipal official, with an advisory council of representative citizens, and the local activity to be headed by a director. Here too, the various operating divisions in the local organization would be similar to those in the state and federal organization.

9. Our entire plan is proposed on the basis of:

- A. Placing full responsibility for operations on the states and communities, where we think it properly belongs.

- B. Using the federal organization to furnish the leadership and guidance in organizing and training the people for civil-defense tasks, coordinating efforts, supplying training materials, and providing the advice and counsel which is needed.

- C. Making maximum use of volunteers, existing agencies and organizations—government, public, and private—and all available skills and experiences.

- D. Developing well-organized and trained units in communities throughout the country, prepared and equipped to meet the problems of enemy attack and to be ready against any weapon an enemy may use.

- E. Intensive planning to meet the particular hazards of atomic or other modern weapons of warfare. (The atomic bomb is a triple-threat combination of (1) a high explosive, (2) a superincendiary, and (3) extreme radioactivity.)

- F. Organizing a small nucleus peacetime organization which could be used in the event of peacetime disasters such as fires, floods, explosions, tornadoes, and other similar catastrophes, and that could be quickly expanded to meet the exigencies of a given situation in a war emergency.

The plan and the legislation which we propose have been developed on a model basis for the federal, state, and municipal organization, and can be easily modified and adjusted to meet a particular situation in the community or state.

Our plan and legislation also contemplate that the organization will not engage in any political activity or any other activities outside the purely civil-defense field.

Civil defense, as related to a community, rests on the following bases:

1. The individual, who, with proper

(Continued on Page 126)

## Joliot-Curie and the Atomic Secrets

(Continued from Page 110)

ington. It serves two primary purposes: to familiarize its designers and operators, under actual working conditions, with the practical engineering problems of building and maintaining a chain-reacting pile, and—more important—to supply a plentiful and energetic stream of neutrons, unavailable from any other known source. Without such neutrons the scientific experiments which are essential for further work in the field of atomic energy would be impossible. It is these further experiments which are the crux of the matter.

"The French have announced that their efforts will be devoted exclusively to research in peaceful applications of atomic energy. Taking the statement at its face value, one must also realize that, however limited the purposes of a research program may be, its accomplishments do not fall quite so readily into the proper categories. An analogy from a neighboring science may help to make the point clear: a medical research scientist may well set out, on a purely humanitarian basis, to find a cure for malaria. . . . Each item of information that he accumulates will be of immense value to a colleague whose motive is not the cure of malaria but the use of malaria as a weapon in time of war. . . .

"Once the pile begins working at its capacity, the French will be able to accumulate facts and figures which are now cloaked in the most severe secrecy. The Anglo-Saxon nations, for example, have never announced the exact number of neutrons created in the average fission of Uranium 235 or plutonium, nor the energy distribution of these neutrons, nor their distribution in time. Such knowledge is of major importance in the design of a bomb. While the Anglo-Saxons had a monopoly on chain-reacting piles, they could keep these figures secret merely by refusing to publish them. Now that the French have discovered the neutron flux, the secret is theirs for a few weeks' work.

"Thus it may be seen that the French have come into no trivial possession. How they will choose to use it remains problematical. . . . As an expression of general principle, they have said . . . that they will maintain a doctrine of free publication. But this has been qualified, and widely qualified, in recent statements by Dr. Joliot-Curie, who

said that information which might be of industrial value to France will be jealously guarded. Any information which might be of direct value in armaments would be withheld until the dangers of an atomic war are laid by United Nations action, or some other form of international agreement.

"This is necessarily an entirely satisfactory statement of policy, so far as the Anglo-Saxon nations are concerned; but a more delicate inquiry would seek to determine how Dr. Joliot-Curie, as a member of the Communist Party, is likely to carry out the program he and his government have set. (It bears repeating that the government must take Dr. Joliot-Curie's own word for most of his actions, just as a patient must ordinarily take the doctor's word in matters where he alone has any pretense to competence.)

"It is a question, in short, of making a judgment of Dr. Joliot-Curie's trustworthiness, and such a judgment is an unwarranted boldness at best. It can only be said that most of those who know him have considerable respect for his acuity, his wisdom, and, above all, his love of France. It was the last of these that led him, during the Occupation, into the Communist Party. There has never been any real indication that his love for his native country runs second to his affection for Russia. It is most unlikely that his actions will be determined by an hysterical Russophilia.

"As much cannot be said with any assurance about some of his associates; and yet there is a real dilemma here. To suggest, as some have done, that the French owe it to their share in Western defense to rid their atomic energy project of Communists, is to propose that they should abandon this work altogether. It is dubious whether the French could continue without Dr. Joliot-Curie; it is certain that they could not continue without the group that would go with him. France is not likely to take such a step on its own, nor to permit such a step to be forced upon it, and it is hardly realistic to suggest it.

"The solution to the dilemma, if there is a solution, must be sought along other lines. As things stand today, France has been told to bear the responsibilities of the British, Canadians, and Americans without enjoying the real benefits of the association. The offer of a *quid pro quo* might well encourage the French to set up their own program of control and to enforce it. To those with excessively tender nervous systems, it might be well to point out that the atomic bomb itself, as an end product or as a

goal, is not included in the Anglo-Saxon association and exchange of information, but remains an American secret and an American responsibility. . . .

"Until time reveals more, little further can be said about the pile at the Fort du Chatillon. That it poses problems cannot be denied. The nature of these problems is still vague—they are clear enough, however, to indicate beyond a doubt that they will not be easily solved."

---

## Planning for Civil Defense

(Continued from Page 111)

training and information on subjects such as first aid, fire detection and prevention, detection of areas contaminated by war gases and ionizing radiation, etc., must, in the event of an emergency, take care of himself.

2. The family, which, similarly, with training, must take care of itself.

3. The community, which should organize itself to handle any emergency. If the emergency were of such proportions as to completely overwhelm the community and make it incapable of caring for itself, then the calling in of:

4. Mobile reserves set up on the basis of mutual aid. Our plan proposes the organization of mobile reserve battalions which can be moved into an overwhelmed community from various locations throughout the several states.

It is proposed that these mobile reserve battalions be organized by setting aside a certain part of the protection services in each community in the state (such as fire, police, medical, etc.) to be supplemented by volunteers in sufficient numbers to make an effective unit.

Each unit would comprise medical services, fire-fighting, rescue and debris clearance, police, radiological defense, emergency feeding, and installation and repair services.

Each unit would also have assigned to it six airplanes and twelve pilots from the Civil Air Patrol to assist in transportation, traffic control, and similar duties.

If, after the mobile reserves were called in, the community were still overwhelmed, then we believe the next step should be:

5. Military aid to civil power to operate under emergency plans that have been and are being developed. The last step then would be:

6. Martial rule. The civil defense would continue operations under military control.